



## Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan Political Relations: An Appraisal

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### Abstract:

Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan share common culture, believes and past and are tied in diplomatic, trade, military, security, strategic and cultural relations. In 1992, both states established diplomatic relations. Since then both states strengthened their ties and deepened cooperation in several sectors, i.e. energy, security, and trade etc. Kyrgyzstan's soldiers get military training and education from Pakistan that enhances its security and defense capability. The major recent development in both countries' bilateral relations is CPEC through which both are now strategically important for other regions. CPEC and Gwadar seaport connect the Central Asian states with water-resources of Arabian sea. The descriptive and analytical approach has been used to conduct this research. The theory of neoliberalism has been applied to explore and analyze both immensely growing relations and its implications on surrounding regions. The paper explores and analyzes political and military relations of both countries to find out its implications on regional peace, integration, growth, and development.

**Keywords:** Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, political relations, regional peace, prosperity, neoliberalism

### INTRODUCTION

Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan are close friends, who share common history, religious affinity, and culture. Since Kyrgyzstan independence in 1991, both countries maintained cordial and smooth relations. Pakistan was the first country to recognize Kyrgyzstan's independence. In 1992, both established diplomatic relations. Relations between both countries are based on regular high level, ministerial level, and diplomatic level etc., visits to enhance their political, economic, military, social and cultural relations. In recent years both have increased bilateral cooperation in trade, economy, culture, education, agriculture, pharmacy, and medical etc., to increase development and prosperity. Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan are interconnecting each other through China Pakistan Economic Cooperation (CPEC). Both states' cordial relations are essential to be maintained for regional peace and development as they are the gateways for regional connectivity.

Kyrgyzstan is a small landlocked state enriched within state water reserves and other natural

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resources like oil and gas etc. It is the first in production of hydroelectricity power which it is currently supplying to China and under CASA-1000 project agreement it will supply hydroelectric power to Pakistan as expected in 2023. Pakistan depends on Kyrgyzstan due to these natural resources and now due to land route connectivity to other regions through CPEC, and trade market for sale of its products. Kyrgyzstan needs Pakistan to access warm water of Arabian Sea, Gwadar seaport, South Asia, and Afghanistan where it could expand its trade, and social growth. Both regularly hold meetings to make their relations more cooperative and consolidated. Both are members of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and coordinate their policies on various issues including terrorism, drug smuggling etc. Kyrgyzstan supports Pakistan stance over Kashmir issue that this issue should be resolved accordingly to UN resolution.

This paper aims to analyze Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan's political relations and their implications on regional peace and development. The theory of neoliberalism has been applied to analyze the implications of growing Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan relations on regional states. While the descriptive-analytical approach has been used to assess secondary sources like books, journal and magazines articles, newspapers, websites, and official reports.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Fahim (2020) analyzed the diplomatic, political, trade, security and cultural relations between the two states. Both states share a long history of common beliefs and culture, they concluded trade agreements. Kyrgyzstan also expressed its desire to train its military officers and other staffs from Pakistan in order to increase its defense and counter terrorism activities.

Asif (2011) examined the relationship between Pakistan and the Central Asian Republics (CARs). The article discusses Pakistan's relations with entire CARs, and not specifically Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan relations. Their relations, problems and challenges, and security issues on Afghanistan border and in Baluchistan were critically evaluated. Moreover, the existing and growing influence of US, Russia, India, Europe, China, and Iran has been described and evaluated with respects to its effects on Pakistan. He argued that Pakistan must adopt policies to assure the development of gas pipeline from the Central Asia to strengthen its trade and economic relations.

Ahmad (2018) stated that CPEC provides enormous opportunity to CARs like to increase trade with Pakistan and go through China for trade extension. The writer has discussed and analyzed in detail the advantages of CPEC connectivity for CARs. Moreover, with this connectivity, the bilateral relations will improve through these corridors. On the other side, India puts efforts in Chahbahar port but lacks chances in the progress of this project because the new port facility would not offer the country to substitute transit way to landlocked Afghanistan and other parts of CARs. China shares long borders with CARs and have close relations with these states while India does not, so it is expected that CPEC would perform a vibrant role in developing trade and economic linkages in between Islamabad and CARs relations.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study employs qualitative approach and descriptive and analytical methods have been used. The data has been collected from secondary sources like books, journal and magazines research

articles, reports, official websites etc. The research is conducted on bilateral relations of Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan and its regional implications which does not have numerical calculations or a testing hypothesis etc. The descriptive analytical approach has been used for this research to develop the best understanding to Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan's growing political and military relations and its implications on regional development and peace.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In the theory of Neoliberalism, the concept of liberal institutionalism says that international cooperation among nations can help to diminish clashes among states (Xu, 2022). Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan coordinate with each other in every sector such as economic, social, political, and cultural at international level. Both countries trade with each other to boost up their economy. This cooperation is helpful in creating peace in the world ("CPEC opens Kyrgyzstan's," 2022). Moreover, Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye who are the proponents of neoliberalism theory say that economic interdependence is creating the complex Interdependence (Keohane, 2011). In both Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan there is free trade and liberal economy. This free trade and liberal economy of both nations helped them play part in creating peace in the world. Trading with many countries will make relations friendly among the countries which will decrease chances of conflict (Fahim, 2022).

Pakistan depends on Kyrgyzstan to fulfill its energy needs of gas, coal, oil and electricity. Similarly, Kyrgyzstan depends on Pakistan to reach International Trade market (Javaid & Dashti, 2016). This dependency is based on concept of complex-interdependency. CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) is an evidence to prove this complex interdependency in between the both. CPEC connectivity projects will provide political, economic, and social benefits to both countries. It will boost not only the trading capacity, but will also create the new market opportunities, potentials and evolve the trade relations of Kyrgyzstan by creating the interdependency and regional integration. Moreover, it will expose Pakistan to its true potentials on economic level and will provide a linkage between regional countries through which they will cooperate to achieve economic development, and boost their market capacity through regional trade. It will bring integration to the region along with economic prosperity (Ali, 2020).

### **PAKISTAN- KYRGYZSTAN POLITICAL RELATIONS**

Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan have century's old well maintained collaborative and close relations. They established diplomatic relations on May 10, 1992 (Government of Pakistan, 2008). Pakistan was the first country to recognize Kyrgyzstan after its independence in 1991. In August 1995, Pakistan established its diplomatic embassy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (Fahim, 2020).

During Mughal empire period, cultural linkages were established between the people of both countries. The Mughal emperor Zaheer-Uddin Babur was warmly welcomed when he visited Ferghana valley currently Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Moreover, Babur's graveyard is in Kyrgyzstan city of Osh which has now become a historically important place for tourists (Rafiq, 2020; "Pakistan hosts 2<sup>nd</sup> session," 2022).

Since 1991, both states enjoyed social, spiritual, and lucrative relations. They signed a number of agreements to promote culture and common development. Both jointly signed agreements to combat drug trafficking (Rafiq, 2020). They have close strategic and trade relations and have

concluded Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) signed in August 1995. Pakistan opened a branch of the State Bank of Pakistan at Bishkek (Fahim, 2020). In 2000, Pakistan opened the National Bank in Bishkek. About twenty-two National banks are operating currently in Kyrgyzstan (“CPEC opens doors,” 2022).

Both countries' relations' are mainly focused on trade and economy. Both have a lot of opportunities to avail and utilize in trade sector. CPEC is one of the greatest opportunities for the landlocked Central Asia particularly for Kyrgyzstan to get access to the warm waters of the Arabian Sea, Gwadar Seaport. Moreover, Kyrgyzstan is a significant member of the Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement (QTTA) whose basic purpose is to facilitate connectivity routes and to provide access to the CARs to seaports and warm water of the Arabian Sea (Fahim, 2020).

On March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1995 QTTA was signed among the countries like Pakistan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Afghanistan. In Pakistan, under this agreement, the route connects different cities of Pakistan with cities of China and then joins Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. This route passes through Karachi to Rawalpindi, Hassan Abdel, and Gilgit and passes to Khunjrab city of China, Kashgar and then Torugart (that adjacent to Kyrgyzstan border), then passes to Bishkek to Akjol and to Kordai (that joins Kazakhstan border), Almaty (Kazakhstan) (Rafiq, 2020). Besides providing sea route connectivity, QTTA also gives road link connectivity to Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, towards Pakistan and China on Karakoram highway and ahead connects this to Kazakhstan which would increase trade among them (Khwaja, 2005). Now this project is the part of CPEC, and it is under-process which connects the Central Asian states with Gwadar seaport. Pakistan required 1300-megawatt Hydel electricity from Kyrgyzstan as it has enriched with these reserves under the project of Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Program (CASA-1000). This project is expected to be completed in 2023 (“Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan express,” 2022).

Both states strive to promote tourism, commercial activities, social contacts and relations, educational visits, and scholarship, building new roads and railway projects, security support, and social interactions. Both are getting more connected under CPEC project through railway projects, roads, and air routes (Fahim, 2020). Both the states are engaged through interconnectivity Project known as ‘Central Asia Regional economic cooperation.’ (“CPEC opens doors,” 2022).

Each country's relationship is based on mutual respect, trust, faith, and confidence which makes a bond of strong friendly ties. As their relations consist of numerous high-level official visits (Government of Pakistan, 2008) on June 14, 2019, former Prime Minister Imran Khan visited Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan to attend the 19th SCO summit. The prime Minister also met with Kyrgyz President Soronbay Sharipovich Jeenbekov in Bishkek. In this meeting, both leaders agreed to increase mutual trade, comprehensively upgrade bilateral and multilateral cooperation in all fields, to increase people to people contacts, increase coordination in the tourism sector, to strengthen and build mutual land and airconnectivity linkages, and to establish a joint minister level commission for joint consultation process on different issues and matters (Fahim, 2020). Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan support each other on international and regional organizations of various issues (“CPEC opens Kyrgyzstan's,” 2022). Kyrgyzstan supports Pakistan on all regional and international issues. forums. On Kashmir issue, it supports Pakistan's stance that Kashmir issue should be resolved according to UN resolutions (“Kyrgyzstan can play,” 2019).

### **Exchange of High Level Visits**

High level visits are the hallmark of Pakistan and Kyrgyz Republic bilateral relations. Since establishment of their diplomatic relations, the leadership of both states exchanged visits in order to strengthen political, military, economic and strategic relations. Both shares common problems, threats, and challenges (Khwaja, 2005).

### **The visits of Kyrgyzstan's Official to Pakistan**

- The president of the Kyrgyz Republic, Askar Akayev paid three-day official visit to Pakistan in Dec 1994. He discussed important regional and international issues, including terrorism and drug trafficking, with President Farooq Laghari and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. During this visit, both the states signed several agreements on trade development and collaboration. The president Askar Akaev paid his second visit to Pakistan in 1995 to strengthen strategic and economic relations.
- On January 17, 2005, on request of General Pervaz Musharraf, Kyrgyzstan president Askar Akaev paid visit to Pakistan. Both states' high officials exchanged views on bilateral relations and regional issues. Kyrgyzstan's president ensured to export electricity to Pakistan (Javaid and Dashti, 2016).
- The Foreign Minister of Kyrgyzstan Mr. Erlan Abdyldaev visited Pakistan on 26 February 2015. During this visit regional and international issues, steps for countering terrorism, extremism and prevention of narcotic drugs also came under discussion.
- In 2017, Speaker of Kyrgyzstan Chynybai A. Tursunbekov paid a three-day official visit to Pakistan with other government officials. The speakers of the parliament of both countries held a meeting and signed an agreement for strengthening cooperation in between the national assemblies of two states, parliaments and trade services and cooperation.
- Kyrgyzstan' Army chief Major General Raimberdi Duishenbiev paid visit to Pakistan on Mar 12-15, 2018. Both sides agreed to increase their cooperation in defense and other fields.
- The Head of the diplomatic mission of Kyrgyzstan, Beishembiev paid working visit to Pakistan on May- 14-16, 2019. During the visit, he went to Karachi, and met with the Governor of Sindh Imran Ismail and president of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce, Junaid Esmail Makda. During the visit, both sides discussed prospects for bilateral cooperation and trade enhancement as well as establishment of direct business contacts, visa problems and resumption of direct flights were also under discussion (Government of Pakistan, 2008).

### **Visits of Pakistan's to Kyrgyzstan**

- In 1995, the Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto visited Kyrgyzstan. During this visit, both countries signed an agreement to start trade services by road.
- In 1996, President Farooq Leghari paid visit to Kyrgyzstan (Javaid, & Dashti, 2016).
- In 2005, the president of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf visited to Kyrgyzstan to further increase collaboration and friendship with Kyrgyzstan. Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan agreed to frame a common working group to jointly examine the opportunities of electricity import from Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan (Khwaja, 2005).
- In 2011, Prime Minister of Pakistan Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani visited Kyrgyzstan. During this visit, both states signed agreement on business terms, educational and technology sector

while an agreement on cooperation in military training and a joint declaration was also signed. Both pledged to revive four states trade shipment strategy and services. To make this program successful, on March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011, they jointly underpinned territorial economic collaboration. Moreover, Gilani held meeting with the Kyrgyzstan Prime Minister Almazbek Atambayev. Both agreed to cooperate to remove all hurdles in way of successful and smooth work in QTTA, signed by four states. In this meeting, both leaders emphasized to strengthen economic, investment, and trade relations. They promised to cooperate with each other in the establishment of the Central Asia-South Asia Regional Electricity's Market (CASAREM) to import electricity from Kyrgyzstan to Tajikistan then to Pakistan. Both signed an agreement on military training and to develop joint trade (Javaid, & Dashti, 2016).

- In May 2015, premier Nawaz Sharif paid visit to Kyrgyz Republic. During this visit, both sides agreed to actively participate in the ongoing initiatives in energy and connectivity sectors between them (Government of Pakistan, 2008).
- In October 2018, President Arif Alvi met President Sooronbay Jeenbakov of Kyrgyzstan in Turkey on the side-line of the event celebrating the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Turkey's formation (Mokrenko, 2018).
- Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qurashi visited Kyrgyzstan in 2019 to attend the meeting of SCO, and also held a meeting with Kyrgyzstan's Foreign Minister, Chingiz Aidarbekov. During this meeting, both parties discussed matters of shared benefits, bilateral relations, multi-lateral cooperation, regional security, trade, and other issues.
- On June 14, 2019, Prime Minister Imran Khan visited Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan to meet with President Soronbay Sharipovich Jeenbekov and to attend the 19<sup>th</sup> summit SCO. In this meeting, both leaders agreed to increase mutual trade and to comprehensively upgrade bilateral and multilateral cooperation in all fields as well as to enhance social contacts among common individuals and collaboration in the tourism sector. Both leaders agreed to establish a joint minister level consultation to consolidate land and air connectivity. Imran Khan invited Kyrgyzstan President to visit Pakistan ("Prime Minister Imran," 2019).
- On September 15, 2022, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met with Kyrgyzstan's President Sadyr Japarov on the side-line of the summit meeting of SCO. During this meeting, both leaders highlighted the importance of increased cooperation in investment sector, in energy sector, in commerce, and in personal interactions. Both leaders agreed to hold next joint meeting of minister as soon as possible. They again recalled and promised that "CASA-1000" power transmission project would be completed on time. Shehbaz Sharif emphasized the Kyrgyzstan entree to the Arabian Sea through ports of Karachi and Gwadar and advantages of CPEC for Kyrgyzstan. He also underlined and discussed chartered flights between the two nations. He appreciated Kyrgyzstan for providing opportunity to more than 11,000 students of Pakistan in Kyrgyzstan medical universities. ("Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan vow," 2022).
- On Jan 23-24, 2018, in the first political consultation of Deputy Foreign Ministers Level in Bishkek, the agenda related to law making, trade, security, economic, consular affairs and an interaction to regional and international organization was considered. At the same year, foreign Minister of both countries met in Tashkent on March 28, 2018 to discuss the Afghan peace process.
- In 2019, Prime Minister Imran Khan attended meeting of SCO in Bishkek and met with Kyrgyz Republic president to overview the bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the countries as well as the international organization. In 2019 a lot of meetings happened as

part of parliamentary cooperation, where higher officials of the two countries were involved to strengthen the relation of both countries.

- In early 2022, Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan established contacts to promote cooperation in the military technical sphere for National Security, and later in April the secretary for Security Council of Kyrgyz Republic attended the meeting of international conference “Islamabad Security Dialogue.”
- On August 18, 2022, the second political consultation was held in Islamabad at foreign minister level between the two states. In September 2022, president of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Japarov and the Premier Shehbaz Sharif held a bilateral meeting on sideline of the SCO summit (Government of Pakistan, 2008). Both states show interest for the improvement of bilateral relations in all areas. Both Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan oppose terrorism and are committed to combat this menace at all levels. (“Ties with Kyrgyzstan,” 2011).

From the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992 till now, political relations of both the states remained warm and cordial evidenced from exchange of visits at all levels (“Kyrgyzstan wants to join CPEC: Envoy,” 2021).

### **Pak-Kyrgyzstan’s Military Relations**

Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan’s military relations are also in immense progress. The Kyrgyz Republic has great attentiveness in security and military cooperation with Pakistan. Kyrgyzstan send its troops to Islamabad for training particularly for counter terrorism. Both Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan signed agreement for enhancing cooperation in military education (Fahim, 2020).

On 15 March 2011, Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan signed an agreement on providing help to each other in military training and to increase rate of mutual trade. The Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani and Kyrgyz Prime Minister Almazbek Atambaev witnessed the signing ceremony. They signed a common statement, introducing the establishment of a mutual business council, cooperation and intelligence sharing, designation of Islamabad and Bishkek as sister cities, directing drug trafficking in the region and reciprocate of parliamentary delegation. Defense Secretary Lieutenant Generals of the two nations signed agreement on defense cooperation under which Kyrgyzstan personal would acquire training in Pakistan military institutions (Newspaper, 2011).

In March 2022, on sidelines of 48<sup>th</sup> meeting of OIC, the foreign minister of Kyrgyzstan Ruslan Kazakbaev and Pakistan Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa held a meeting to discuss military technical cooperation. Both states pledged to deal jointly with terrorism, and extremism. Kyrgyzstan’s foreign Minister emphasized to increase cooperation to send its military persons to study in Pakistan’s military academy (“Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan discuss,” 2022).

Currently, both states have cordial and close political relations. Both are getting more interdependent as both are increasing collaboration in various fields like trade, economy, investment, pharmacy, cultural programs, parliamentary cooperation etc. Moreover, both are actively cooperating to complete joint regional interconnectivity programs in time like “CASA-1000” power transmission project. Both are warmly willing and agreed to interconnect with each other through CPEC that connects regions with each other like the Central-Asia, South Asia, and Europe. Both initiated the direct flights which have increased people to people interaction and trade. About 11000 Pakistani students are getting medical education in Kyrgyzstan universities (“Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan call for,” 2022).

On March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011, both signed an agreement on military cooperation for border intelligence sharing and for stopping drugs smuggling to maintain regional peace. Moreover, Kyrgyzstan's soldiers get military training in Pakistan's military institutions ("Pak-Kyrgyz accords," 2011). Both are broadly cooperating in defense sector and Pakistan is delivering defense goods and sharing experience with Kyrgyzstan ("Kyrgyz envoy lauds," 2022). Moreover, Kyrgyzstan is significant for Pakistan as it provides short connectivity road on CPEC to the Central Asia, Eurasia and European Union ("Kyrgyz ambassador," 2019).

In order to strengthen political relations, both states hold annual holding bilateral political consultations (BPC) to discuss and review cooperation, progress, issues, and opportunities. On January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018, BPC was held in Bishkek. The two have shown satisfaction on growing progress of bilateral relations. Both examined the opportunities of cooperation in the field of education, trade, economy, technology, defense, culture, parliamentary exchanges, humanitarian matters, and people to people links etc. Both discussed peace and security situation of the region. In this meeting, Pakistan inaugurated Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan sewing training centre for Kyrgyzstan with financial support of Pakistan ("First round of bilateral," 2018). In September 2022, on side-lines of SCO meeting at Samarkand Uzbekistan, bilateral meeting was held between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan's Prime Ministers who expressed satisfaction on growing relations and urged to progress relations in fields of investment, trade, energy, inter-parliamentary relations, defence, security, and people to people contacts. Kyrgyzstan President Zhaparov insisted upon the international community to support states like Pakistan in flood crises as they do not have any contribution in gases emission ("Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan call for," 2022).

On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022, during the OIC session the foreign Minister of Kyrgyzstan Ruslan A Kazakbaev held 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of Kyrgyz-Pakistan intergovernmental commission for expanding cooperation and development in fields of economy, trade, scientific and technology etc. The commission which was established in 1994, also arranges exchange of high-level visits in both states. Both states' foreign ministers decided to rejoice the competition of 30 years of successful diplomatic relations. Both pledged to make relations deeper and strong to jointly solve bilateral issues of cooperation ("Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan discuss," 2022).

### **Regional Cooperation through SCO**

Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan cooperate at the platform of SCO against common bilateral and regional threats like terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking, and weapons smuggling. On SCO platform, both states make a joint bond of common security and cooperation with other Central Asian states, India, Russia, and China. These could be a great source for regional peace and integrity. These states are now jointly working and cooperating to eliminate their common problems (Government of Pakistan, 2019). Besides terrorism and extremism, there common problems and challenges are growing poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, diseases, and underdevelopment (Khan, S. 2019).

On SCO platform, Pakistan played a significant role in combating terrorism (Government of Pakistan, 2019). Being SCO member, Pakistan's role against terrorism elimination is crucial as it has an experience to deal this problem easily. Its role in building peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan could not be ignored. SCO now integrates two regions in cooperation and security: The Central Asia and the South Asia (Khan, S. 2019). All members of SCO have a great capability to



jointly expand their trade, economic and social growth, political relations, and secure energy needs through cooperation (Government of Pakistan, 2019).

In 2019, Pakistan attended SCO meeting at Beshkik Kyrgyzstan where Kyrgyzstan's President Sooronbay Sharipovich Jeenbekov has cherished its role in SCO. In bilateral meeting, both states pledged to enhance their political, economic and trade relations. Since 2017, when Pakistan became a permanent member of SCO, it has attended its various meetings on foreign policy, national security, trade, economy, science, development, youth and women empowerment, tourism, and media etc., (Khan, S. 2019). Pakistan's membership of SCO is a great development of its foreign policy. It got an excessive opportunity to develop cordial relations with regional states of Central Asia and South Asia and to play its role in regional stability ("SCO and Pakistan,"2023).

### **Regional Cooperation through CPEC**

Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan are willing and agreed to connect through CPEC. Kyrgyzstan gives the shortest route to Pakistan to get connectivity to the Central Asia, Eurasia, and Europe through China land route of Kashghar. The Kashghar city is 200 km away from Kyrgyzstan border. There are two entrance ways for Kyrgyzstan that is Torugart and Erkeshtam. On the same route, Pakistan gives access to the landlocked Kyrgyzstan to Gwadar seaport and to South Asian region. CPEC is the regional connectivity project that interconnects various regions like the South Asia, the Central Asia, Eurasia, Europe, and Middle East with each other. Under CPEC, including Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan all other regions have an opportunity to expand their investment, trade, cooperation, stability, development, and interdependence. On March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1995, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and China signed QTTA to develop an effective connectivity routes in between the CARs and Pakistan. Now, this project is part of the CPEC, and it is still under construction. This route connects Karachi to Rawalpindi and to Hassan Abdal and then to Gilgit Khunjarab to Kashgar to Torugart Kyrgyzstan to Bishkek to Akjol to Kordai and to Almaty Kazakhstan. It is the regional interconnectivity project. This route length is 3710 km long (Rafiq, 2020).

### **Regional Cooperation through ECO**

The strategic location of all member states of ECO is very significant. Its members are Pakistan, Iran, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and Afghanistan. Turkey connects two regions; Asia and Europe, Iran is intersecting three regions like Central Asia, South Asia and Middle East, the CARs are located mainly in way of Belt Road Initiative (BRI) and links China and Russia with each other and with rest of world. Pakistan could be a gateway for Kyrgyzstan and other CARs trade, oil, and gas transaction towards other regions.

On ECO platform, all regions are being integrated as these have various cooperation agreement like ECO Transit trade agreement, ECO trade Agreement, MOU in between ECO, and World Customs organization (WCO) and ECO countries and Transit Trade Framework Agreement on cooperation against smuggling and customs frauds. Moreover, Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan's relations are significant for regions integrity and peace as both are the gateway for each other and for other regions. All members of ECO are integrating each other on the organizational platform due to their geographical location but now these are speedily interconnecting each other under BRI through CPEC and Gwadar seaport. ECO region makes a great trade and investment potential for its members which they could gain through interconnectivity (Government of Pakistan, 2017).

### **An Analysis of Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan**

Pakistan-Kyrgyzstan political and military relations are getting closer and more cooperative speedily. Under political relations, both states cooperate in trade, investment, pharmaceutical, agriculture, cultural, educational, and parliamentary sectors etc., for gaining more development and regional peace and prosperity. Overall trade, economic, pharmacy, agricultural, educational, and cultural cooperation deliver equal benefits to both states like bringing social development and prosperity by providing more opportunities of jobs and business to people etc.

Both states' bilateral relations are equally beneficial for each other. Pakistan needs Kyrgyzstan for its energy resources like gas, oil, and electricity. Though, Kyrgyzstan is a landlocked country who needs connectivity to sea water and ports which it now would get through CPEC and Gwadar seaport. The two states are the gateways for other states of the South-Asia, the Central Asia, Europe, and Eurasia as these connect all regions with each other through CPEC. Hence, new trend of cooperation, interdependence and development is being evolved that would bring peace and prosperity in the world. This development would increase the strategic importance of Pakistan for other regions due to which Pakistan would grow more politically, economically, and socially.

Both states' military and defense cooperation are active and progressive. Both are cooperating by sharing intelligence information and training to combat terrorism and drug smuggling. Pakistan is selling its defense products to Kyrgyzstan. It gives military training and education to Kyrgyz soldiers. This cooperation strengthens the security of Kyrgyzstan and maintains regional peace and security and enhances the trade market of Pakistan.

Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan relations are strategically and geo-politically significant. Pakistan gives access to landlocked Kyrgyzstan and to other CARs through CPEC to Arabian Sea, Afghanistan, and other countries of South Asia. Similarly, Kyrgyzstan gives land route connectivity to Pakistan through Kashghar city of China to other CARs, Europe, Eurasia, and the Middle East. Moreover, Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan are the gateways for other states, and they deliver them connectivity through CPEC, Gwadar seaport and BRI to other regions. Therefore, these two are bringing regional and global interconnectivity among states and making them more interdependent and cooperative for trade and prosperity expansion.

Cordial and consolidated relations are necessary to be maintained by Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan for growing regional interconnectivity and peace. QTTA and CASA-1000 agreement are the programs that would reduce electricity shortage in Pakistan and increase foreign investment and job opportunities in the country. These projects would bring great relief and developments for the people who suffer hunger, unemployment, high growing prices, and high electricity bills etc. Kyrgyzstan would take similar advantages like its trade market and electricity sale would be expanded and its people would get more jobs.

In the context of neoliberalism, the two states' political, economic, and trade and institutional and organizational cooperation is increasing rapidly to involve the states belong to different regions. The connectivity through CPEC and Gwadar seaport would give more impetus to this growing cooperation, peace, and interdependence between the two states and the regions includes South-Asia, the Central Asia, Europe, and Eurasia etc. In result, the neoliberalism ideas would be highly promoted and new actors would be introduced to new great games in these regions.

## CONCLUSION

Both Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan enjoy cordial relations as, they both have recently completed successful thirty years of diplomatic relations. Both have friendly political, military, cultural, economic, and social relations. Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan's cooperation and interdependence is increasing day by day as they are holding regular high-level official meetings to strengthen and expand their cooperation in various sectors. Both support each other in various organizational platforms like SCO, ECO, and OIC etc. The two countries defense and military cooperation is significant as Pakistan now have a Kyrgyzstan market for the sale of its defense products. This market could be expanded in future towards surrounding regions. Moreover, as both have cooperation in intelligence sharing and military training to combat terrorism and other illegal activities like drug smuggling etc., resultantly, it maintains regional peace. While the military cooperation strengthens the security of Kyrgyzstan.

Most importantly, each geographical location is crucial as both are the gateway for other regions. Both states are promoting regional interconnectivity and security that would increase regional peace development and prosperity. Thus, Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan bilateral relations are substantial for regional peace, development, security, and prosperity.

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